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ABSTRACT

A 2002 staff satisfaction survey was administered to 100 sixth form colleges, general further education colleges, and beacon and specialist colleges in England. A questionnaire containing 38 positive statements concerning 6 broad areas one's own role; the staff of the college; style of senior management; communication; customers, including learners, employers, and community groups; and college was rated with a 5-point scale by nearly 13,000 respondents. Results suggested that intrinsic job satisfaction is primarily influenced by factors directly related to the education and care of learners rather than to matters concerning college management, systems and structures that were the focus of the survey. However, these two broad areas of staff perception seemed to determine the overall balance of respondents' opinions: (1) whether or not they were valued by their employers and felt secure in their positions, and (2) how effectively they were communicated with, consulted and involved in the decision-making process. Where staff indicated satisfaction with these areas, they usually took a positive view of other aspects of their job and their college, and where they indicated dissatisfaction with them, they did not. (Contains 2 appendices, 19 figures, and 4 references.) (MO)

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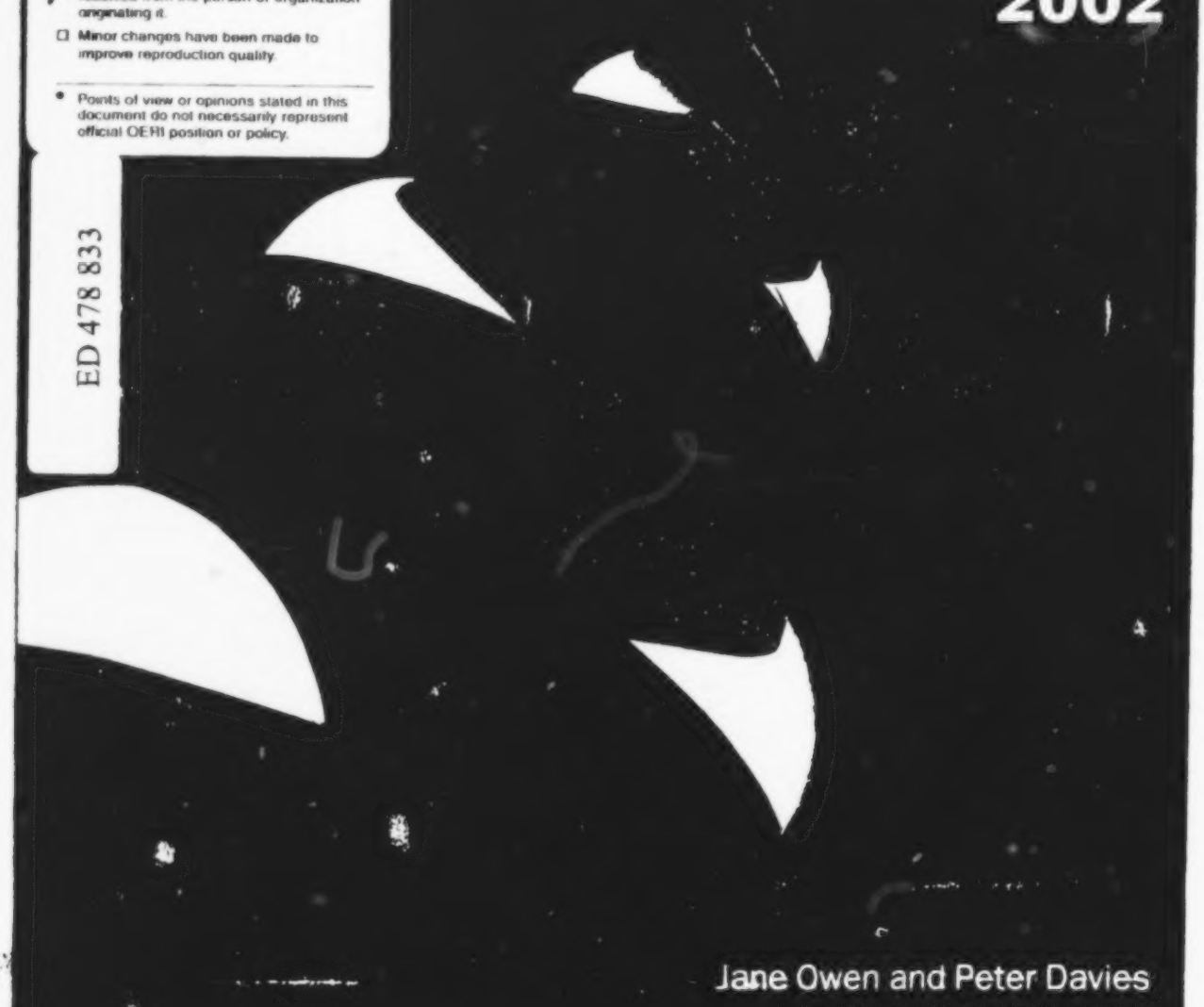

Jane Owen and Peter Davies

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and achievement
programme

The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

- We aim to reach all colleges and work-based learning providers.
- We offer extra support to colleges and work-based learning providers that are receiving Standards Fund money to improve their practice.
- All our activity themes are backed by a programme of research and evaluation.
- The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is funded by a grant to the Learning and Skills Development Agency from the Learning and Skills Council.

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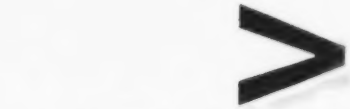

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Feedback should be sent to:
Information Services
Learning and Skills Development Agency
Regent Arcade House
19–25 Argyll Street
London W1F 7LS.
Tel 020 7297 9144
Fax 020 7297 9242
enquiries@LSDA.org.uk

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Further information

For further information about the issues discussed in this publication please contact:
Jane Owen
Development Adviser
Raising Quality and Achievement Programme
Learning and Skills Development Agency.
Tel 020 7297 9083
jowen@LSDA.org.uk

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Acknowledgements

The research in this book is based on the results of the staff satisfaction survey conducted during the summer of 2002. The initial analysis was carried out by Graham Knight of LSDA.

Background

The Learning and Skills Development Agency's staff satisfaction survey has proved to be very popular since it was piloted in 1999. The survey gives colleges the opportunity to measure levels of staff satisfaction while maintaining the confidentiality of individual staff members. It has now provided three years of data from a wide range of colleges that allows ready comparisons and analysis of year-on-year trends.

All colleges that participate in the annual survey do so at the same time each year to enable a more reliable year-on-year comparison. The anonomised benchmark data also allows colleges to compare their results against the college sector in general, sixth form colleges, general FE colleges and beacon and specialist colleges.

Following the survey carried out in 2000, LSDA produced a summary report for the sector. Demand is still high for the publication entitled *Listening to staff* and interest in the survey has not been confined to those colleges that took part. As a result, LSDA has decided to produce a further publication based on the 2002 survey results.

Approach

One hundred colleges participated in the staff satisfaction survey that took place during summer 2002, resulting in a total of 12,964 completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire was based around 38 positive statements that respondents rated for importance and for agreement. Almost without exception, respondents regarded all of the areas covered within the statements as important to themselves. Respondents also indicated some degree of disagreement with almost half of the statements.

Summary of results

As with all self-selecting survey (ie surveys where participants choose to take part) the results should be treated with some caution.

The large majority of those surveyed appear to enjoy their job and would recommend their college as a good place to work. These findings suggest that intrinsic job satisfaction is primarily influenced by factors directly related to the education and care of learners rather than to matters concerning college management, systems and structures that were the focus of our survey. However, in these latter areas almost as many staff were negative about their job and their college than were positive.

Two broad areas of staff perception stand out more than any others in determining the overall balance of respondents' opinions:

- whether or not the 'college cared about them'; whether or not they were valued; and whether they felt secure
- how effectively they were communicated with, consulted and involved in the decision-making process.

Where staff indicated satisfaction across both these areas, they usually also took a positive view of other aspects of their job and their college. Where there was disagreement, this appeared to jaundice overall attitudes.

Many comments from staff reflected the issues in *Success for all* (DfES 2002). For example, key phrases from the paper such as:

We want to lift the burdens of bureaucracy to empower colleges and other providers to improve services and meet their targets rather than account for every little action

and

We will tackle the bureaucracy associated with multiple inspection and audit, which is faced by many providers

will resonate through much of the sector.

The fact that the majority of staff agreed with the statement 'I enjoy my job' – even though there is dissatisfaction about various aspects of the way that the sector is currently managed and financed – demonstrates that there is a dedicated workforce with considerable enthusiasm that could and should be more fully involved in the ongoing improvements to service provision.

What influences staff satisfaction?

Staff satisfaction is not just about achieving a 'feel good' factor for an organisation. Research has linked staff satisfaction to motivation and to customer satisfaction. Satisfied and motivated staff tend to be more productive too and few organisations, regardless of the sector within which they operate, can afford to waste the potential input and resultant improvement to service provision that comes from an involved and empowered staff. To quote someone from a local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), 'If you employ a pair of hands, the brain comes free of charge'.

Managers often consider salary to be the prime motivator of most staff, but research has shown this not to be true. Although salary is important, people often regard it as an indication of how much they are appreciated.

Other factors affecting staff satisfaction are:

- **clarity** staff knowing what to do
- **interest** staff finding the work stimulating
- **discretion** staff having some discretion in how the job is performed
- **feedback** staff being appreciated for the work they do.

O'Malley 2000

Cynthia Scott and Dennis Jaffe, in their book *Empowerment*, listed the three key areas that emerged from a survey of employees on satisfaction:

- **validation** respect for employees as people; flexibility to meet personal needs; encouragement of learning, development and new skills
- **information** knowing why these things are being done; getting inside information about the company
- **participation** employees having control over how they do their work; involvement in decisions that affect them.

Scott and Jaffe 1992

Other views

Recent research published on the Investors in People website stated:

While 50% of employers claim that employee satisfaction is important to them, it is clear from the research by Investors in People UK that this is not the case. Only 6%, less than one in ten owner managers, considered that employee satisfaction was a major business objective. Significantly, a massive 45% of the UK's bosses put customer satisfaction as their most important business aim.

Employers are missing a trick, as one in four employees stated that when they were happy they were more productive. A further 13% also claimed that they felt that their happiness had a direct effect on customer satisfaction.

www.iipuk.co.uk

From the Department of Trade and Industry's website:

People who say they work in a great organisation put it down to a knowledge that they know what's going on and how they fit into the bigger picture, and a sense that their contribution is valued and makes a difference. All of this adds up to a sense of opportunity, achievement and excitement.

www.dti.gov.uk

Providers themselves must also view all of their staff as valued members of the team. *Success for all* DfES 2002

Tools for measuring levels of staff satisfaction

A wide range of tools place considerable emphasis on staff satisfaction.

EFQM Excellence Model

Developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and promoted in the UK by the British Quality Foundation (BQF), the Excellence Model is based on nine criteria. Five of these criteria are 'enablers' covering what an organisation does (ie leadership, people, policy and strategy, partnership and resources, and process). The remaining four criteria are 'results' covering what an organisation achieves (ie people results, customer results, society results and key performance results).

The model helps identify strengths and weaknesses, provides a benchmark against which an organisation can measure itself from year to year and allows an organisation to compare itself against others.

The criteria for 'people results' require an organisation to measure staff perception and to ensure that:

- people are involved and empowered
- people and the organisation have a dialogue
- people are rewarded, recognised and cared for.

Figure 1 EFQM Excellence Model

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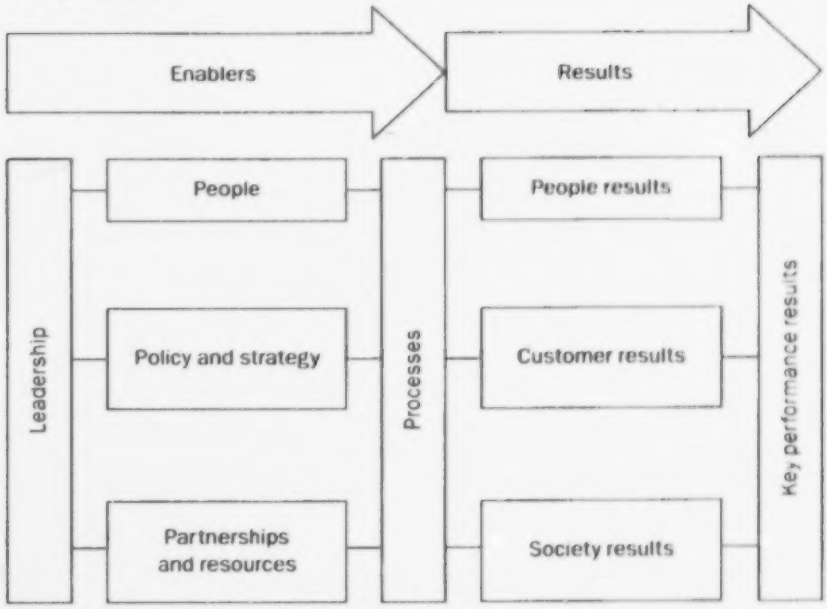

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Investors in People

Investors in People is awarded to organisations that meet criteria laid down for the training and development of people. Developed in 1990 by the National Training Task Force, in collaboration with a number of well-respected organisations including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD), the award is based on the premise that an organisation cannot continue to be successful if it does not ally its people's skills with its business needs.

Learning PROBE

Learning PROBE (Promoting Business Excellence) is a diagnostic benchmarking tool. Developed from Service PROBE by LSDA with Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University, it gives organisations a snapshot of their current state. It is based on research into world-class organisation in the UK and USA.

Learning PROBE covers practices and performance across a broad range of areas such as leadership, service processes, people and performance management. The results give organisations an indication of their strengths and weaknesses and allow them to compare their performance against other organisations.

It specifically measures the level of staff empowerment, staff satisfaction and openness as part of the snapshot view of how the college operates.

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The 2002 staff satisfaction survey

The questionnaire

The questionnaire required participants to rate 38 statements concerning six broad areas:

- my own role
- the staff of the college
- style of senior management
- communication
- customers (learners, employers, community groups, etc)
- college.

In every case, the statements represented the characteristics and attributes of employment at a college that would generally be considered as desirable from the viewpoint of maximising job satisfaction.

Participants were asked to rate each of the 38 statements:

- for their *importance* to themselves
- for their *strength of agreement* with the statement.

Ratings were recorded using a five-point scale where 1 = very unimportant / strongly disagree and 5 = very important / strongly agree. Staff were also asked to rate their strength of agreement with two further statements:

- I enjoy my job.
- I would recommend the college as a good place to work.

Staff were additionally asked to indicate which of the 38 statements was the most important to them and which one action could be taken to improve the culture of their college.

Finally, opportunity was provided for any other issues to be raised.

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Figure 2 The 38 statements

My own role

1 I feel valued in this organisation.
2 I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college.
3 My views are sought and considered.
4 I feel I have job security.
5 There is an opportunity for me to progress within the organisation.
6 My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively.
7 I have the authority to do a good job.
8 I get sufficient training to do my job effectively.
9 I get feedback from my manager on the work I do.
10 I am **not** thinking of leaving the college.

The staff of the college

11 Staff work well together in teams.
12 Staff views are sought and considered.
13 Staff are involved in planning improvements and setting targets.
14 Academic and support staff have shared goals.
15 Staff know what they are expected to do.
16 Staff know how well they are performing.
17 Staff receive appropriate training to make them effective in their job.
18 Staff feel they have job security.
19 Staff are committed to improving the quality of all aspects of the college.

Style of senior management

20 Staff are not afraid to say what they really think.
21 Staff are encouraged to take risks or try new things without fear of failure.
22 Management see complaints as opportunities for improvement rather than as threats.
23 Management are effective in making decisions about the organisation.

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Communication

24 Communication is effective in this college.

25 Information about strategic and operational goals and performance are communicated effectively.

26 Information about the college is readily available.

27 Staff are given the information they need to do their job effectively.

Customers

28 The college encourages feedback from all its customers.

29 The college acts upon feedback from all its customers.

30 Complaints are dealt with effectively within the college.

College

31 The college has a reputation for the quality of its provision.

32 The college has a good future.

33 Education is central to the management strategy of the college.

34 Adequate resources are provided by the college for staff.

35 Staff workplaces are adequate.

36 Adequate resources are provided by the college for students.

37 Equal opportunities are embedded into the culture of the college.

38 The college genuinely cares about the welfare of its staff.

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Methods of analysis

Importance / agreement matrixes

The importance / agreement matrixes, on which much of our survey analysis is based, are intended to provide an at-a-glance means of identifying the sector's strengths and problem areas in terms of staff attitudes to their jobs. In each matrix, ratings are divided between four quadrants labelled A–D. The solid lines that form the boundaries between the quadrants are positioned at the levels of the overall average ratings for importance and agreement. The dotted lines indicate the average ratings for importance and agreement for the particular type of college or cohort of staff concerned.

Broadly speaking, quadrants A–D can be interpreted as follows:

A **high importance/high agreement** ratings in this quadrant indicate areas of strength to be maintained and promoted – especially those nearest the top right-hand corner

B **low importance/high agreement** areas of strength to be maintained, but of lesser priority than those in quadrant A

C **low importance/low agreement** potential problem areas, but of lesser priority than those in quadrant D

D **high importance/low agreement** ratings in this quadrant indicate problem areas that need to be confronted – especially those nearest the top left-hand corner.

These categories are intended as broad guidelines. It would be misleading and unwise to distinguish in this way between ratings that are in fact very close to each other, even though they may be either side of one or both of the overall average boundary lines. (Note here that all the mean ratings for importance were well above the mid-point on the scale, so that distinctions in the shades of opinion about what was important to the staff who responded were much less apparent than the relative differences in levels of agreement with the statements.) Equally, low levels of agreement may have resulted in whole or in part from factors that are external to college management and, therefore, not directly susceptible to their influence.

CHAID analysis

CHAID analysis was used to identify the relative profiles of those respondents most likely and least likely to agree with the statement 'I enjoy my job' in terms of their strength of agreement with all the other statements. The aim was to flag those aspects of staff jobs that were associated with the highest and lowest levels of overall staff satisfaction.

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Survey results

As with previous years, all colleges in England were asked by letter whether they wanted to take part in the staff satisfaction survey. Participation in the survey is optional and the individual college results are treated as confidential to the college. Only aggregated results are reported on outside of the individual colleges. As a result, the survey results should be treated with some caution.

The sample of participating colleges was self-selecting and cannot, therefore, be said to be truly representative of the sector, even though it includes a range of college types across a wide geographical area. The sample sizes and response rates also vary considerably. Individual college sample sizes ranged from 27 to 404 and response rates from 15% to 89%, with an overall response rate of 38%. We regard it as likely that the survey results under-represent the views of the more apathetic staff, and of staff who doubted the value of exercises of this kind. If anything, we would expect the true picture of staff opinion across the sector to be somewhat more critical than that outlined in the following section.

Overall findings

Importance

Almost without exception, respondents regarded all of the areas covered within the 38 statements as important to themselves. The six statements rated highest for importance were:

The top three statements rated highest for importance have remained the same and in the same order over the past three years of the survey.

- The college genuinely cares about the welfare of its staff.
- The college has a good future.
- Education is central to the management strategy of the college.
- The college has a reputation for the quality of its provision.
- Communication is effective in this college.
- Adequate resources are provided by the college for students.

The six statements rated least strongly for importance were, in descending order to the least important:

- Staff are involved in planning improvements and setting targets.
- Information about strategic and operational goals and performance are communicated effectively.
- Academic and support staff have shared goals.
- Staff are encouraged to take risks or try new things without fear of failure.
- There is an opportunity for me to progress within the organisation.
- I am **not** thinking of leaving the college.

The four statements rated least strongly for importance have remained the same over the past three years, with only one minor change in order.

Given the narrow spread of the importance ratings, though, the difference in the relative importance that respondents accorded to the two sets of statements listed above is more apparent than real.

In contrast, there was a much wider spread in the strength of agreement with the same statements. Compared with the ratings for importance, strength of agreement was generally much less positive. One-third or more of the respondents indicated some degree of disagreement with half of the statements, giving ratings of just 1 or 2. There were no instances where less than 10% of respondents expressed disagreement.

We should note, however, that a major caveat applies to this pattern of results. The statement 'I enjoy my job' drew by far the highest level of agreement, with a mean rating of 3.90 and some 70% of respondents recording ratings above the mid-point on the scale.

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Agreement

Other than overall job satisfaction, the six statements that drew the highest levels of agreement were:

- Equal opportunities are embedded into the culture of the college.
- The college encourages feedback from all its customers.
- I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college.
- My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively.
- Staff work well together in teams.
- The college has a good future.

The following statements attracted the least agreement, in descending order to the least agreement:

- Management see complaints as opportunities for improvement rather than threats.
- Staff are encouraged to take risks or try new things without fear of failure.
- Communication is effective in this college.
- There is an opportunity for me to progress within the organisation.
- Staff workplaces are adequate.

Far more agreed than disagreed with the statement 'I would recommend the college as a good place to work'. These findings suggest that intrinsic job satisfaction is primarily influenced by factors not explored in the questionnaire – including teaching and the relationship with learners – rather than the matters concerning college management, systems and structures that were its focus.

Most important statement

Staff were asked 'Which one of the 38 statements is the most important to you?

Results from this question are shown in Figure 4.

This question was asked in both the 2001 and 2002 survey.

The top six responses are identical for both years.

The statement 'I feel valued in this organisation' was by far the most commonly singled out as that of the highest personal importance, with almost one-quarter of respondents indicating this to be the case.

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Figure 3 Importance and level of agreement ratings

Importance	Agreement	Difference	Statement number
4.64	2.77	1.87	38
4.62	3.45	1.17	32
4.61	3.25	1.36	33
4.60	3.37	1.23	31
4.60	2.53	2.07	24
4.60	2.96	1.64	36
4.58	2.68	1.90	34
4.55	3.47	1.08	6
4.55	2.93	1.62	27
4.53	3.69	0.84	37
4.53	3.45	1.08	11
4.52	2.43	2.09	35
4.52	3.28	1.24	15
4.51	3.21	1.30	17
4.51	2.78	1.73	18
4.51	2.69	1.82	23
4.51	2.95	1.56	1
4.48	2.76	1.72	12
4.48	3.17	1.31	30
4.47	3.04	1.43	4
4.43	3.36	1.07	8
4.43	3.05	1.38	16
4.42	3.68	0.74	2
4.41	3.37	1.04	19
4.41	3.36	1.05	7
4.41	3.08	1.33	29
4.41	3.68	0.73	28
4.40	2.70	1.70	20
4.35	3.42	0.93	26
4.34	3.20	1.14	9
4.31	2.64	1.67	22
4.30	2.85	1.45	3
4.30	2.86	1.44	13

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Importance	Agreement	Difference	Statement number
4.26	2.90	1.36	25
4.21	2.79	1.42	14
4.10	2.57	1.53	21
4.00	2.52	1.48	5
3.96	3.25	0.71	10

For the following two statements only the level of agreement was measured:

3.90	I enjoy my job
3.32	I would recommend the college as a good place to work

My own role

1 I feel valued in this organisation.
2 I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college.
3 My views are sought and considered.
4 I feel I have job security.
5 There is an opportunity for me to progress within the organisation.
6 My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively.
7 I have the authority to do a good job.
8 I get sufficient training to do my job effectively.
9 I get feedback from my manager on the work I do.
10 I am **not** thinking of leaving the college.

The staff of the college

11 Staff work well together in teams.
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14 Academic and support staff have shared goals.
15 Staff know what they are expected to do.
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35 Staff workplaces are adequate.
36 Adequate resources are provided by the college for students.
37 Equal opportunities are embedded into the culture of the college.
38 The college genuinely cares about the welfare of its staff.

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Figure 4 Responses to the question 'Which one of the 38 statements is the most important to you?'

Statement number	Number of responses	%	Valid %
1	3013	23.2	25.1
2	321	2.5	2.7
3	129	1.0	1.1
4	1196	9.2	10.0
5	585	4.5	4.9
6	496	3.8	4.1
7	220	1.7	1.8
8	259	2.0	2.2
9	81	0.6	0.7
10	170	1.3	1.4
11	311	2.4	2.6
12	140	1.1	1.2
13	53	0.4	0.4
14	59	0.5	0.5
15	42	0.3	0.4
16	25	0.2	0.2
17	132	1.0	1.1
18	239	1.8	2.0
19	245	1.9	2.0
20	155	1.2	1.3
21	79	0.6	0.7
22	67	0.5	0.6
23	231	1.8	1.9
24	408	3.1	3.4
25	29	0.2	0.2
26	7	0.1	0.1
27	155	1.2	1.3
28	10	0.1	0.1
29	34	0.3	0.3
30	16	0.1	0.1
31	406	3.1	3.4
32	415	3.2	3.5

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Statement number	Number of responses	%	Valid %
33	832	6.4	6.9
34	222	1.7	1.9
35	143	1.1	1.2
36	214	1.7	1.8
37	120	0.9	1.0
38	724	5.6	6.0
Subtotal	**11 983**	**92.4**	**100.0**
Information not provided	981	7.6	
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**	

My own role

1 I feel valued in this organisation.

2 I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college.

3 My views are sought and considered.

4 I feel I have job security.

5 There is an opportunity for me to progress within the organisation.

6 My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively.

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16 Staff know how well they are performing.

17 Staff receive appropriate training to make them effective in their job.

18 Staff feel they have job security.

19 Staff are committed to improving the quality of all aspects of the college.

Style of senior management

20 Staff are not afraid to say what they really think.

21 Staff are encouraged to take risks or try new things without fear of failure.

22 Management see complaints as opportunities for improvement rather than as threats.

23 Management are effective in making decisions about the organisation.

Communication

24 Communication is effective in this college.

25 Information about strategic and operational goals and performance are communicated effectively.

26 Information about the college is readily available.

27 Staff are given the information they need to do their job effectively.

Customers

28 The college encourages feedback from all its customers.

29 The college acts upon feedback from all its customers.

30 Complaints are dealt with effectively within the college.

College

31 The college has a reputation for the quality of its provision.

32 The college has a good future.

33 Education is central to the management strategy of the college.

34 Adequate resources are provided by the college for staff.

35 Staff workplaces are adequate.

36 Adequate resources are provided by the college for students.

37 Equal opportunities are embedded into the culture of the college.

38 The college genuinely cares about the welfare of its staff.

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Free-text responses

Two free-text questions were included on the questionnaire:

- If there were to be one action to be taken that would improve the culture of the college, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you would like to raise?

The answers received were coded to allow better comparison between individual colleges and college types.

When asked to identify **one** action that would improve the culture of the college, three broad areas featured commonly in respondents' replies:

- management / management style
- communications / consultation / involvement
- resources /IT.

Asking for additional comments gave staff the opportunity to raise issues that were not necessarily included in the main section of the questionnaire. The most common issues raised were:

- resources /IT
- salary / conditions of service / reward / progression
- management / management style.

Figure 5 Responses to the question 'If there were to be one action to be taken that would improve the culture of the college, what would it be?'

	Number of responses	%	Valid %
Management / management style	1399	10.8	17.2
Communications / consultation / involvement	1370	10.6	16.9
Resources /IT	953	7.4	11.7
Teaching staff / support staff / interdepartmental relations	680	5.2	8.4
Workload / paperwork / flexibility	544	4.2	6.7
Student discipline / attitudes / inappropriate for college or course	483	3.7	6.0
Salary / conditions of service / rewards / progression	450	3.5	5.5
Value accorded to staff / staff morale	435	3.4	5.4
Priority of education and student versus financial objectives	294	2.3	3.6
Casualisation of staff versus permanent staff	174	1.3	2.1
Equal opportunities / recruitment / fairness in promotion	167	1.3	2.1
Training	152	1.2	1.9
Courses / course planning / structure	99	0.8	1.2
Poor / inappropriate staff	96	0.7	1.2
Publicity / image /PR	82	0.6	1.0
Minimisation of restructuring / change	63	0.5	0.8
Good place to work	24	0.2	0.3
Other	651	5.0	8.0
Subtotal	**8116**	**62.6**	**100.0**
No comment	4848	37.4	
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**	

Figure 6 Responses to the question 'Is there anything else you would like to raise?'

	Number of responses
Resources / IT	781
Salary / conditions of service / rewards / progression	746
Management / management style	707
Publicity / image / PR	531
Communications / consultation / involvement	445
Workload / paperwork / flexibility	423
Value accorded to staff / staff morale	379
Teaching staff / support staff / interdepartmental relations	229
Good place to work	192
Student discipline / attitudes / inappropriate for college or course	155
Equal opportunities / recruitment / fairness in promotion	147
Training	140
Priority of education and students v financial objectives	110
Casual staff / full-time	108
Courses / course planning / structure	74
Poor / inappropriate staff	56
Minimisation of restructuring / change	51
Other matters raised	202

32% of all respondents (4159) made a total of 5476 comments.

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Common issues

A number of issues were raised by virtually all colleges, and these were very similar to the 2001 results.

Management / management style and communication were the two most common responses to the question 'If there were to be one action to be taken that would improve the culture of the college, what would it be?' for the past three years.

Resources /IT was the fifth most common response in 2000, the fourth most common in 2001 and the third most common in 2002.

Salary is, as would be expected, a major issue with staff. For teaching staff, the comparison with school teaching salaries tends to bring the issue into even sharper focus. Teaching staff are aware that they could earn more money by teaching similar subjects in school sixth forms. A number of non-teaching staff felt that their qualifications and experience were not taken into account when setting salaries.

> *A respectable wage would do a lot for staff morale. Lecturers seem unlikely to be rewarded in any other way now (except of course by student thank yous).*

Staff commented frequently on a lack of effective communication both within the management structure and across college departments. A need was voiced for management to accept that communication is a two-way process and some comments were made that management listening skills should be improved. At the other end of the scale, some staff were concerned that they were being swamped with information and that, as a result, they could easily miss important information.

> *There is an increasing tendency to blitz information in an unfocused manner. E-mail allows everyone to be copied with everything and photocopying means entire documents can be reproduced. The result is that most material is buried or deleted without being read.*

> *We know about our job and need to be consulted about issues that affect our working lives. By the time senior management hear our points of view they have been diluted so much they are no longer useful.*

> *Lack of communication is too common, and too much is taken for granted, with teachers the last to be informed.*

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Staff empowerment and involvement in decision-making was raised frequently. Staff felt that constructive criticism of the college was not encouraged and in some cases was discouraged. This is unfortunate as many staff are keen to contribute to the ongoing improvement in the delivery of high-quality service delivery.

> *'Consultation needs to be taken more seriously by senior management.'*

Issues around management style were raised in some colleges. Staff at all levels in a number of colleges commented on rudeness. A typical comment was that a college principal did not even answer when members of staff said 'hello'. A bullying management culture was also mentioned at several colleges, including bullying of female members of staff. Negative comments about management should not be seen to imply that staff do not want to see managers. In fact, a lack of visibility was something that was referred to in many colleges. Staff in these colleges wanted to see more of the management team and the governors.

> *'Senior management need to get out more: sitting in classes, attending staff/teacher meetings.'*

There is a perceived divide between departments, teaching and non-teaching staff, management and non-management staff, and between permanent and contract staff. The lack of opportunities for social interaction was raised as a contributory factor in this.

> *'As a member of the academic support staff, I feel that there is still far too much of a gap between us and the teaching staff. Our contribution to learning is not recognised.'*

> [We need] *team spirit! We should all be working towards a common goal!'*

We will introduce a scheme of awards for teachers, lecturers, trainers, managers and support staff in the learning sector ... which recognise and celebrate excellence in different parts of the sector.

Success for all DfES 2002

There appears to be a problem in many colleges with staff feeling that they are not valued. This was not simply about financial reward, though financial reward was a factor, but about a feeling that good work was not recognised regularly.

In circumstances where financial constraints can limit the ability of individual colleges to recognise or reward staff through improvements in salary, then other means of showing appreciation become even more important.

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> [There is a wish] *for the college to acknowledge the contribution made by staff and to put in place a structure for progression throughout the institution.*

> *Staff will put up with privations if they feel valued on a day-to-day basis and not just at the annual address of the principal.*

Many teaching staff felt that they were being taken away from their primary role of teaching to service excessive, often externally imposed, administrative systems and bureaucratic quality systems.

> *Increased bureaucracy and duplication of admin are adding to an already overloaded working week. Holidays are spent trying to catch up on marking, course preparation and admin.*

Casual work and part-time contracts affected teamwork and morale in some colleges. The lack of job security meant that many staff could not plan for the future. Part-time staff felt that they were expected to attend meetings and training outside their contracted hours and were not paid for additional hours worked.

> *The assumption that part-time staff and hourly paid staff should attend seminars, training and staff meetings in their own time is appalling... They are becoming increasingly frequent and demanding.*

> *Non-existent job security. I feel I am treated as a commodity not a person.*

The perceived emphasis on business and finance over education is still being raised in many colleges.

> *College is a place of education, not a money-making business. Yes finances have to properly administered, but not "bums on seats = money".*

Resources

The 2002 survey, like the previous year's survey, generated many comments about resources. Teaching and learning resources were not always sufficient or suitable. Staff gave examples of not being able to obtain even basic equipment such as pens for boards.

> *We need enough resources to do the job to the best of all staff's abilities.*

Other resource issues included a lack of student common rooms, the state of classroom decor and furniture, insufficient IT resources, and sports and leisure facilities.

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The lack of appropriate workspaces for staff would appear to be having a detrimental effect on staff working at a number of colleges.

'The workspace is inadequate. We have no personal workspace to call our own. We are constantly tripping up over each other in a very cramped space.'

'More and better staff workspaces are needed. I have to store and carry out my own preparation and planning at home because of lack of adequate workspace in college.'

Comments about the need for staff common rooms also continue to be made in a number of colleges, with staff suggesting that the lack of a central focus point for them to meet their colleagues has had a negative effect on both teamwork and cross-college communication. Taken with the comments previously highlighted about the divide between staff at all levels, staff common rooms could offer some part of a solution and may be worth considering.

'A decent staff room for the staff and a social area would be a big improvement.'

Dealing with inappropriate behaviour

The 2001 survey saw a rise in comments about student behaviour, punctuality and attendance. Again this continued in the 2002 survey. It was the sixth most common response to the question 'If there were to be one action to be taken that would improve the culture of the college, what would it be?'. There has been a shift in emphasis, however. A small number of staff are now raising the issue of violence and drug-taking on college premises and staff in colleges in several locations around the country mentioned the word 'security'. Though these numbers may not be statistically significant when measured against the total number of staff that have taken part in the survey, the spread of these comments could be a warning of an increasing problem.

'Student behaviour is on a downward spiral. I don't feel safe on my campus – we've had guns brought in by students. I feel so sorry for the security staff and sad that they're needed in the first place. I have students who feel unsafe too.'

Staff felt that senior managers had to publicly support a consistent disciplinary policy for dealing with learners who intimidate other learners and staff, or who disrupt the learning experience for others. There appears to be a fear that the lack of action over what some staff see as worryingly inappropriate behaviour will adversely affect the reputation of colleges and will stop learners of all ages,

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but particularly those over 19, from using the college. If this proves to be true then there could be serious problems in the future when promoting lifelong learning.

> *A number of students roam corridors aimlessly; often with nowhere else to go, but they disrupt others learning, and intimidate everyone.*

Colleges need to identify ways of dealing with these problems and work may need to be carried out on identifying methods of promoting inclusiveness and working with disaffected young people without disadvantaging other aspects of college life.

> [There needs to be] *consistent firm action against students who have no intention of working.*

Strength of agreement relative to importance

Figure 7 on page 28 displays the overall mean ratings for agreement against the related ratings for importance. Particularly noticeable here were the number of high importance / low agreement ratings in quadrant D, especially relating to the statements:

- The college genuinely cares about the welfare of its staff.
- Communication is effective in this college.
- Adequate resources are provided by the college for staff.
- Management are effective in making decisions about the organisation.
- Staff views are sought and considered.
- Staff workplaces are adequate.

In contrast, the most notable areas of strength emerging from the survey (high importance / high agreement ratings displayed in quadrant A) related to the statements:

- Equal opportunities are embedded into the culture of the college.
- Staff work well together in teams.
- The college has a reputation for the quality of its provision.
- My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively.
- The college has a good future.

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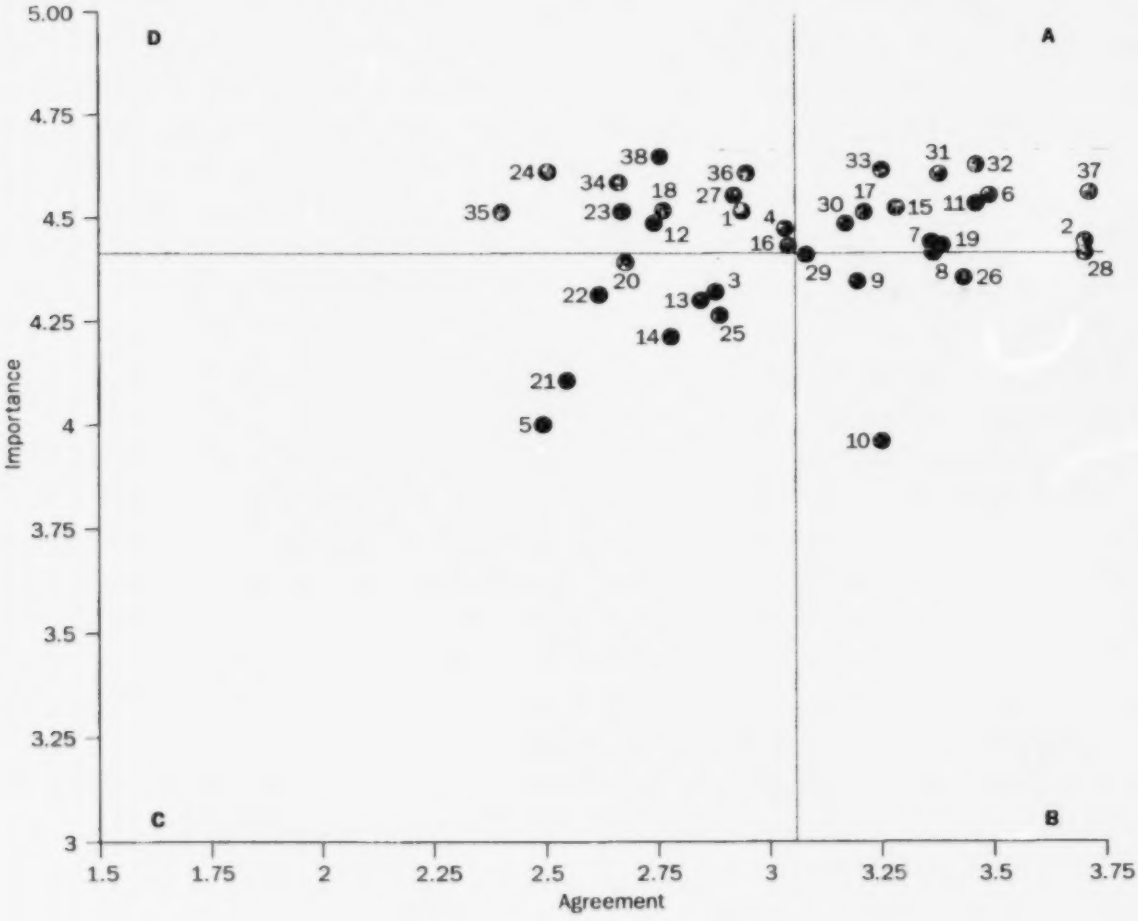
Figure 7 Overall importance / agreement matrix



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Differences by type of college

Figures 8–10 on pages 30–32 display equivalent importance / agreement ratings for respondents at different types of college. The relative ranking of each statement varied little according to type of college when compared with the overall picture.

Responses from general FE/tertiary college staff, which constituted the large majority of participants, were very similar to the overall pattern in every respect.

The same was true of respondents from specialist colleges. However, sixth form colleges were characterised by notable variations. The majority of importance ratings recorded by staff at these institutions were slightly lower compared with the overall pattern, while relative agreement was notably stronger. Only three statements fell within the overall high importance / low agreement quadrant D, compared with 12 in the case of respondents from general FE/tertiary colleges. There were relatively higher levels of agreement with the statements 'The college has a reputation for the quality of its provision' and 'The college has a good future'.

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Figure 8 Importance / agreement matrix – general FE and tertiary colleges

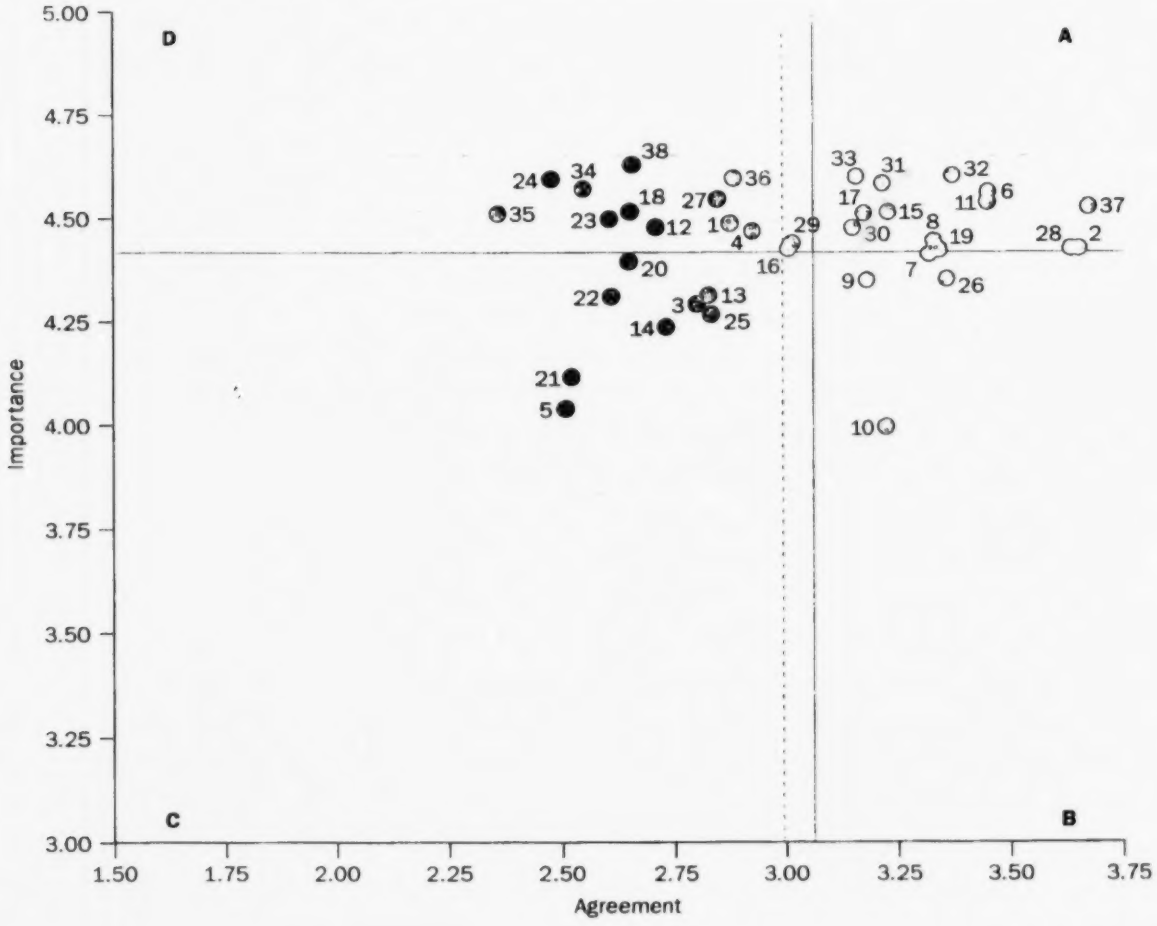

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Figure 9 Importance / agreement matrix - sixth form colleges

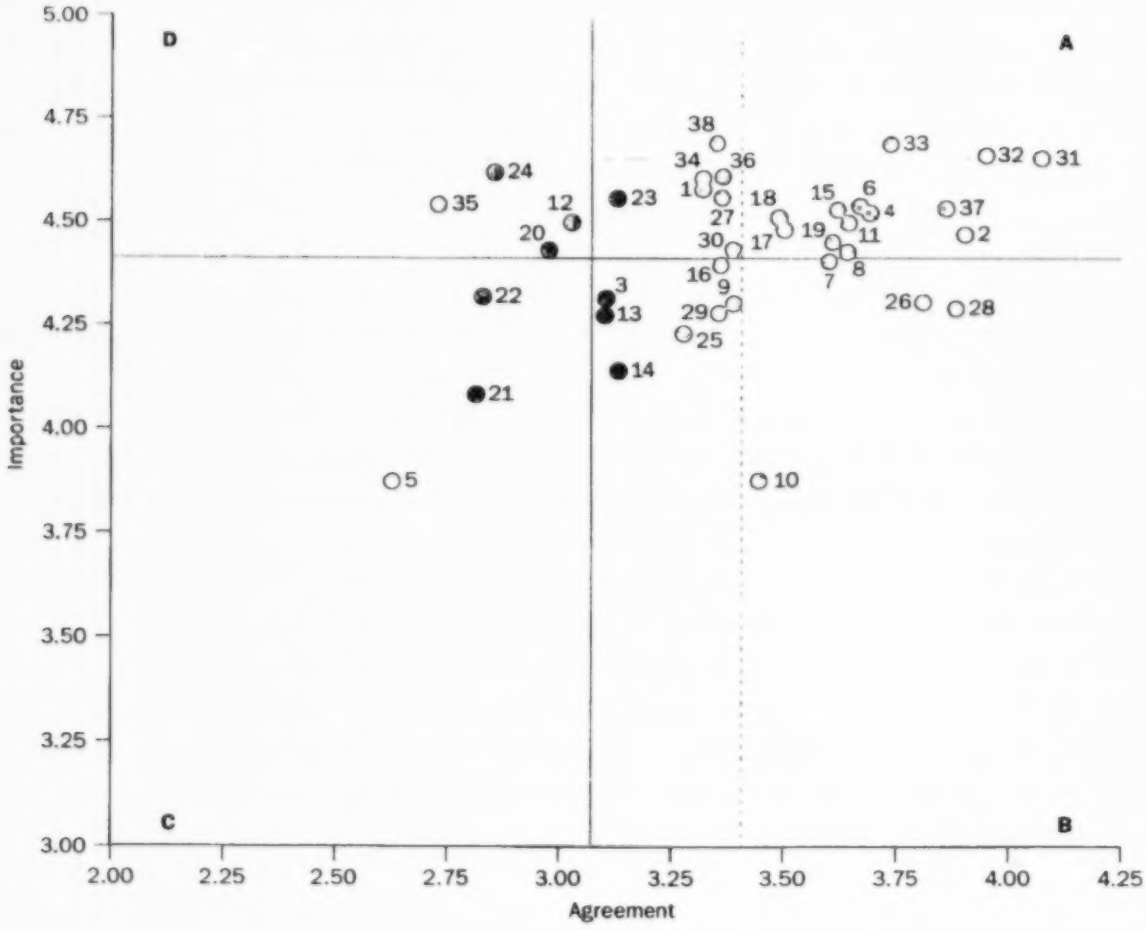

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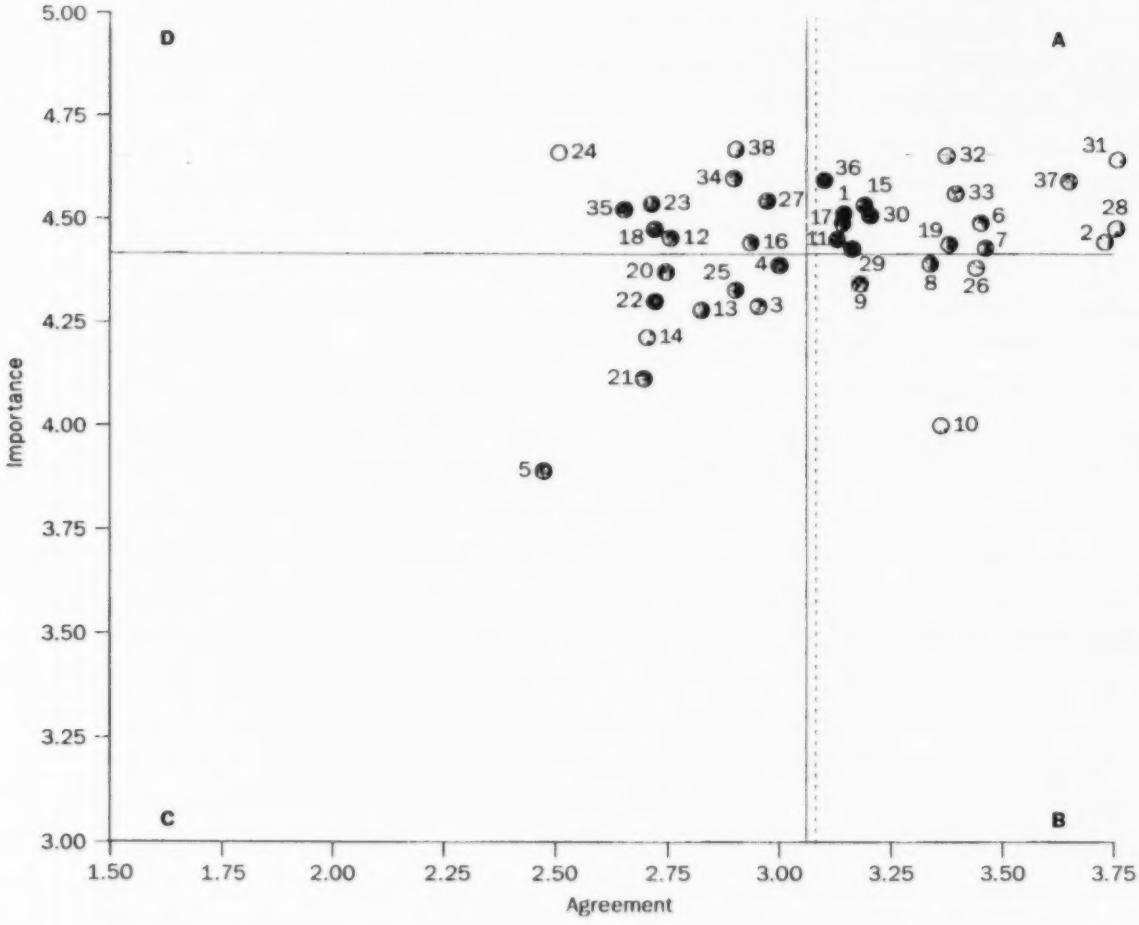
Figure 10 Importance / agreement matrix – specialist colleges



Differences by category of staff

As with college type, the main differences were in the relative strength of agreement profiles, rather than in the relative rank orderings of the ratings for importance and agreement:

- **SMT versus other management** SMT members exhibited the most positive profile in terms of strength of agreement, with no statements falling within the overall high importance / low agreement quadrant D, compared with seven for other management. In turn, the agreement ratings for other management were significantly higher than those for staff (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11 Importance / agreement matrix – SMT

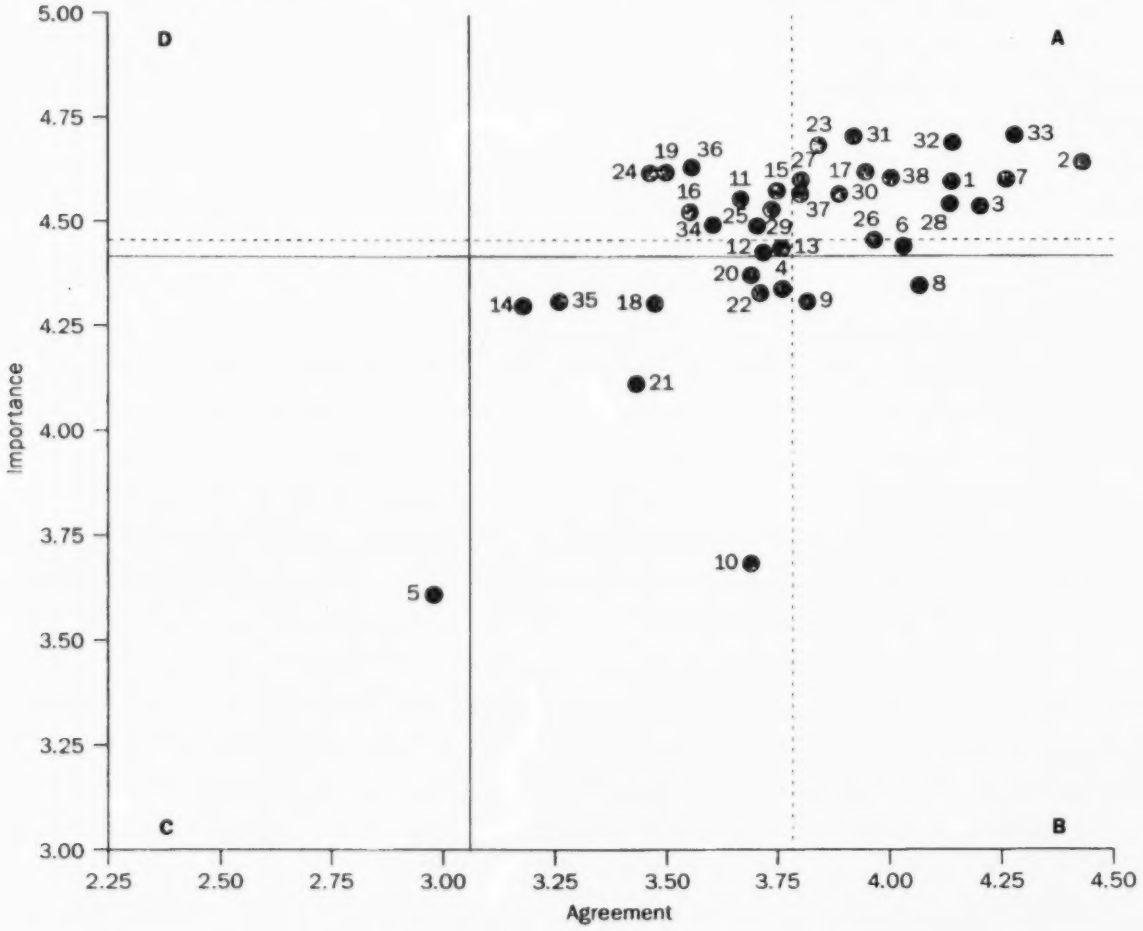
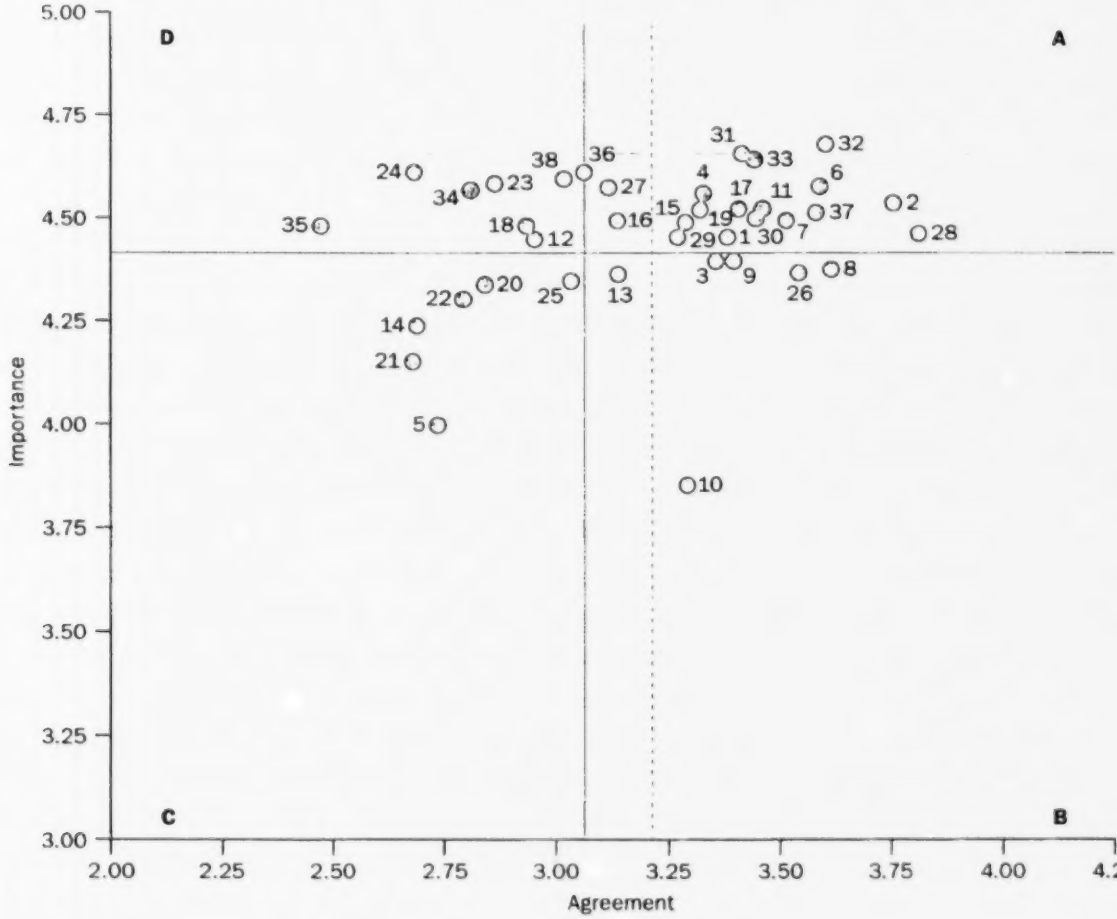


Figure 12 Importance / agreement matrix – management (not SMT)



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- **Academic versus support staff** Support staff displayed somewhat more agreement with the statements than academic staff (Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13 Importance / agreement matrix – academic staff

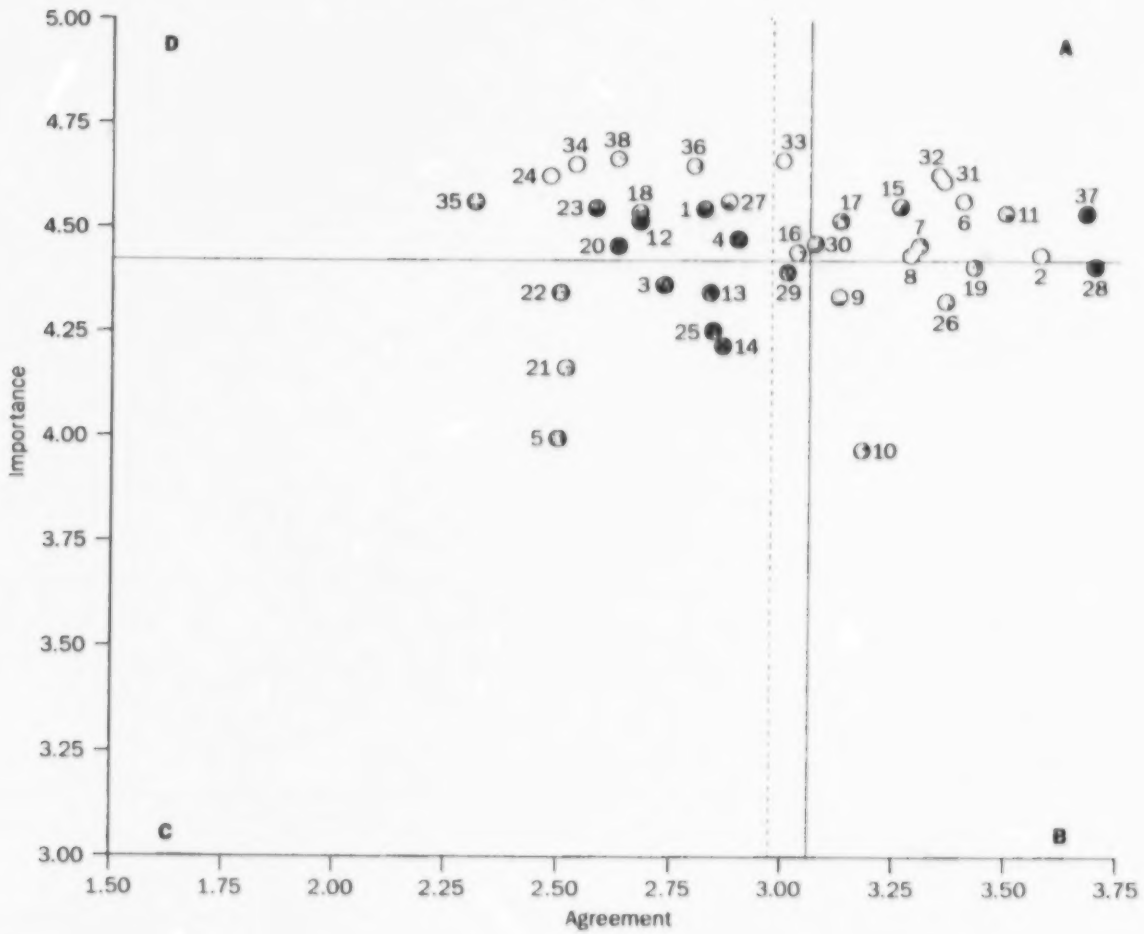

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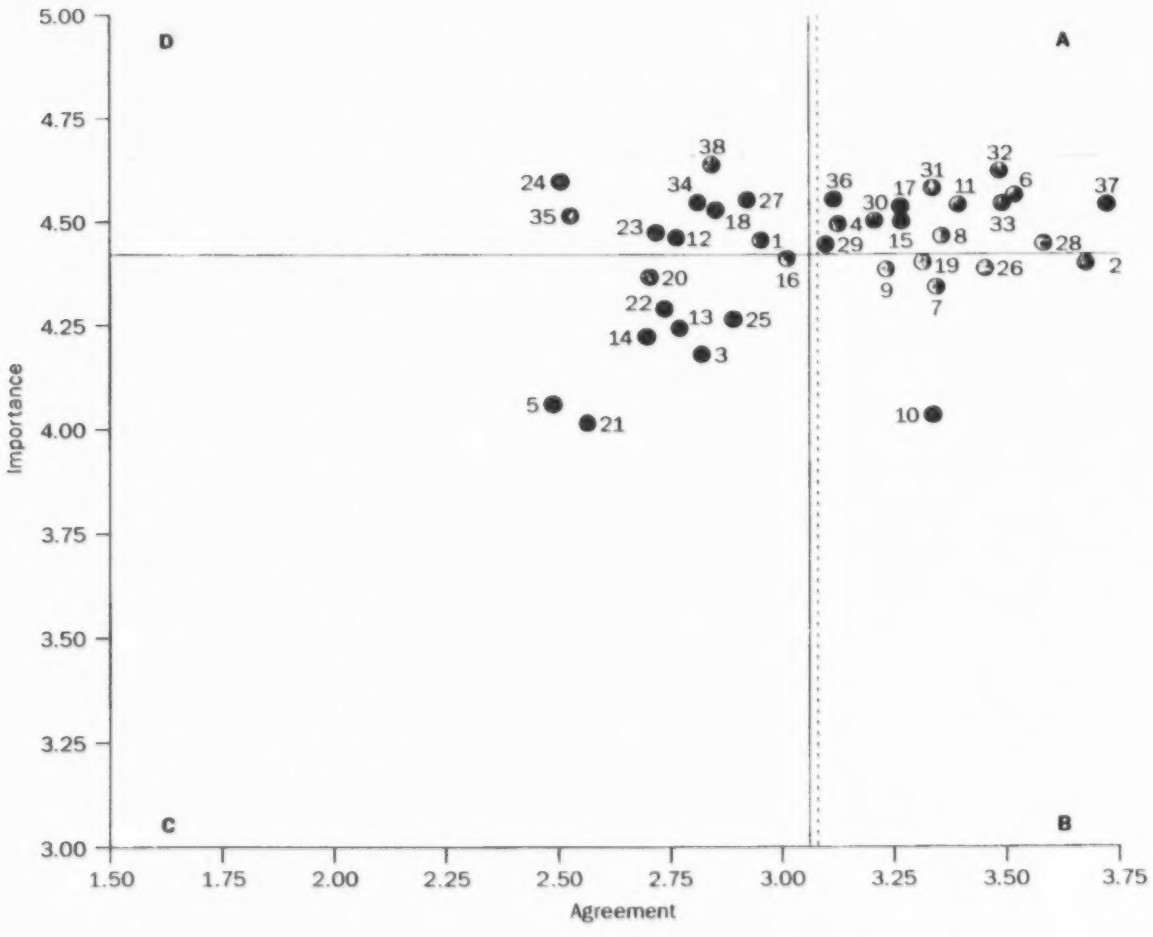
Figure 14 Importance / agreement matrix – support staff



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- **Full-time versus part-time staff** Part-time staff were more positive when compared with full-time staff (Figures 15 and 16).

Figure 15 Importance / agreement matrix – full-time staff

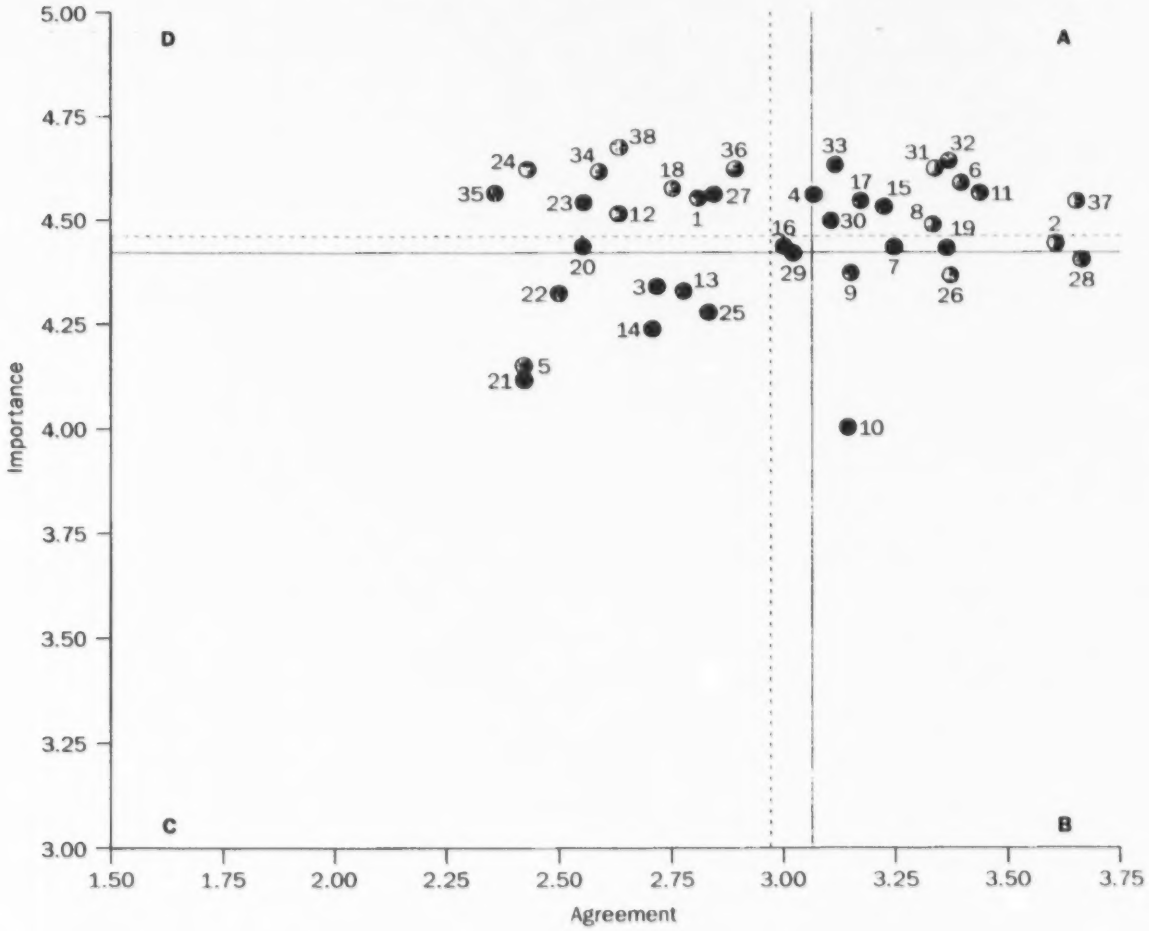

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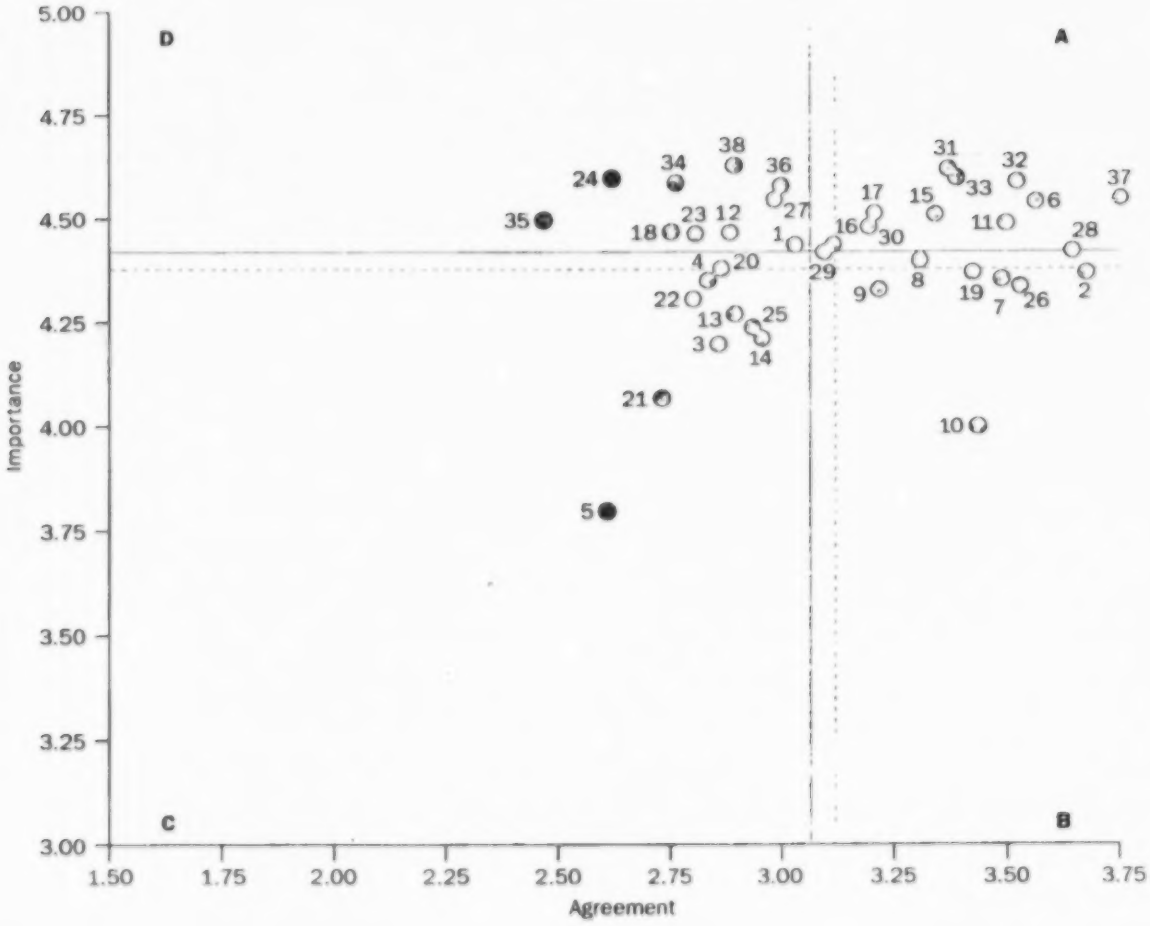
Figure 16 Importance / agreement matrix – part-time staff



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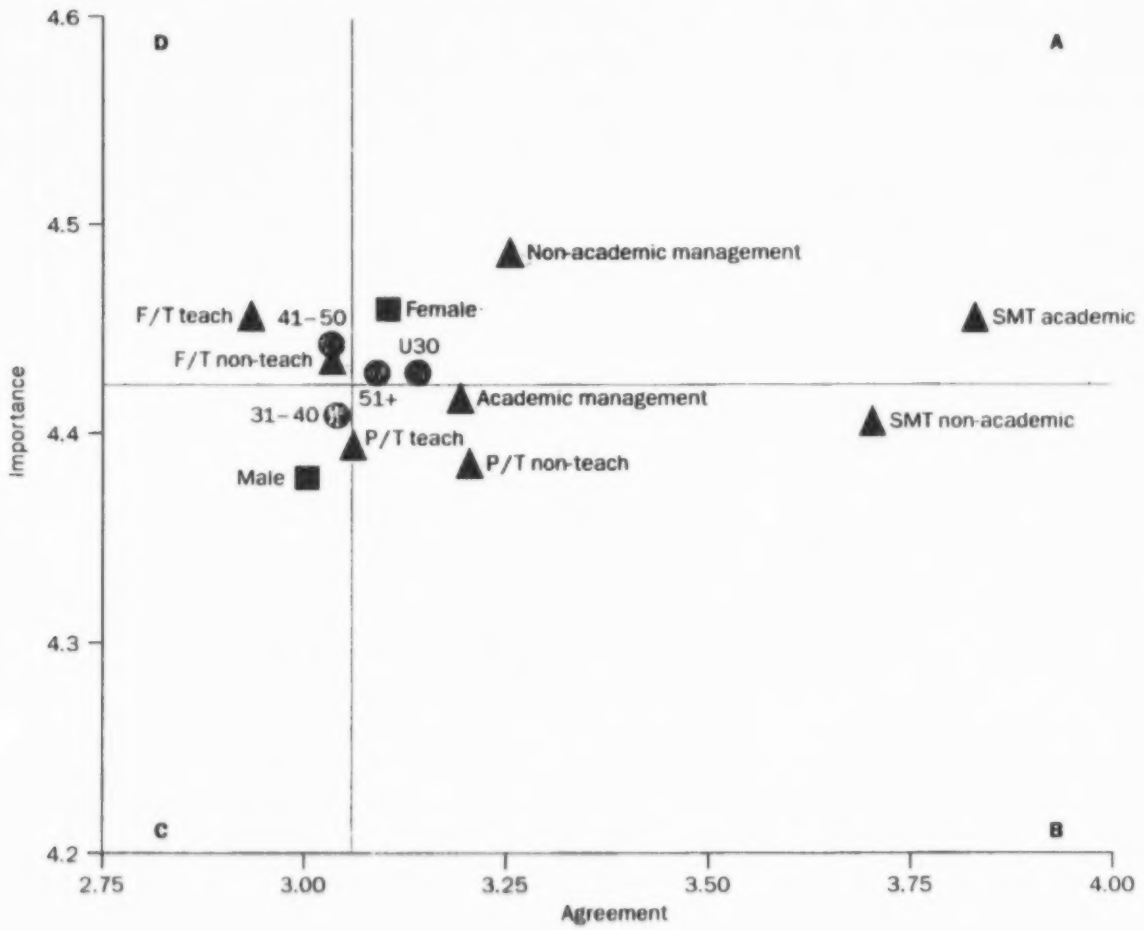
The 'mean of the means' has been used to pinpoint the different cohorts within the matrix (Figure 17) and shows that there are also significant differences between responses according to both age and gender.

Figure 17 Importance / agreement matrix – cohort comparisons



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CHAID analysis

The characteristics that best defined those respondents who strongly agreed (rating 5) that 'I enjoy my job' were:

- strong agreement with the statement 'I am **not** thinking of leaving the college'
- strong agreement with the statement 'I feel valued in this organisation'
- strong agreement with the statement 'The college has a good future'.

Some 78% of the respondents to whom all three of the above characteristics applied also strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job, compared with around 32% overall.

The characteristic most associated with respondents who strongly disagreed (rating 1) that 'I enjoy my job' was strong disagreement with the statement 'I am **not** thinking of leaving the college'.

Around 13% of the respondents to whom this applied also strongly disagreed that they enjoyed their job, compared with 3% overall.

There was also a strong relationship between the ratings for the statement 'I enjoy my job' and those for 'I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college'.

Staff and learner satisfaction

LSDA also operates a parallel college benchmarking service for learner satisfaction. As there was some overlap between the users of the learner benchmarking service and participants in the survey of staff satisfaction, it was possible to investigate the relationship between staff and learner opinion. Two comparisons were undertaken:

- learner strength of agreement with the statement 'I would encourage somebody else to attend the college' versus staff strength of agreement with the statement 'I would recommend the organisation as a good place to work' (Figure 18)
- learner strength of agreement with the statement 'Overall, the college has met my expectations' versus staff strength of agreement with the statement 'I enjoy my job' (Figure 19).

Note
These analyses were based on the responses from 3658 staff and 24,422 learners at 26 colleges.

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Staff and student satisfaction

The lines of best fit indicated that there was a positive relationship between the relative strength of agreement of staff and learners at the same colleges with statements concerning their experiences. The correlation between staff and learner opinion was slightly stronger in the case of learners' attitudes to whether or not the college had met their expectations and staff opinion as to whether they enjoyed their job (Figure 19).

Figure 18 Learner versus staff satisfaction (1)

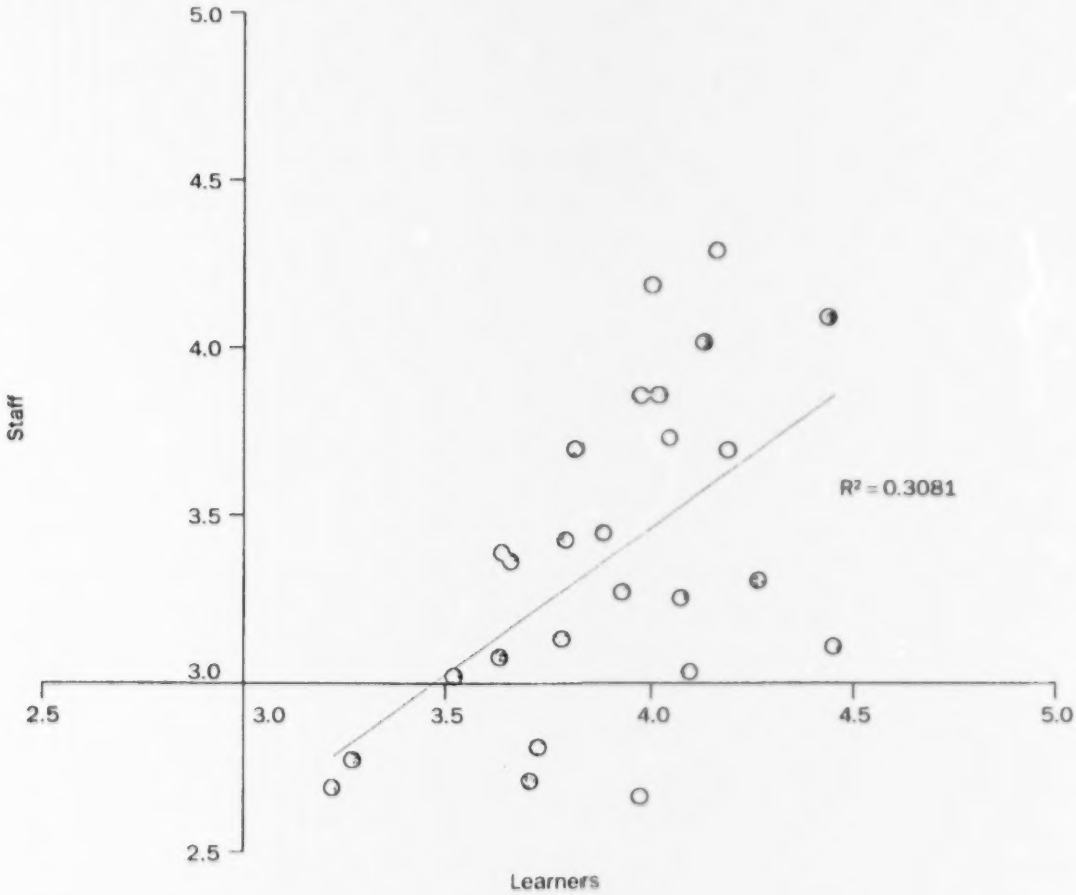

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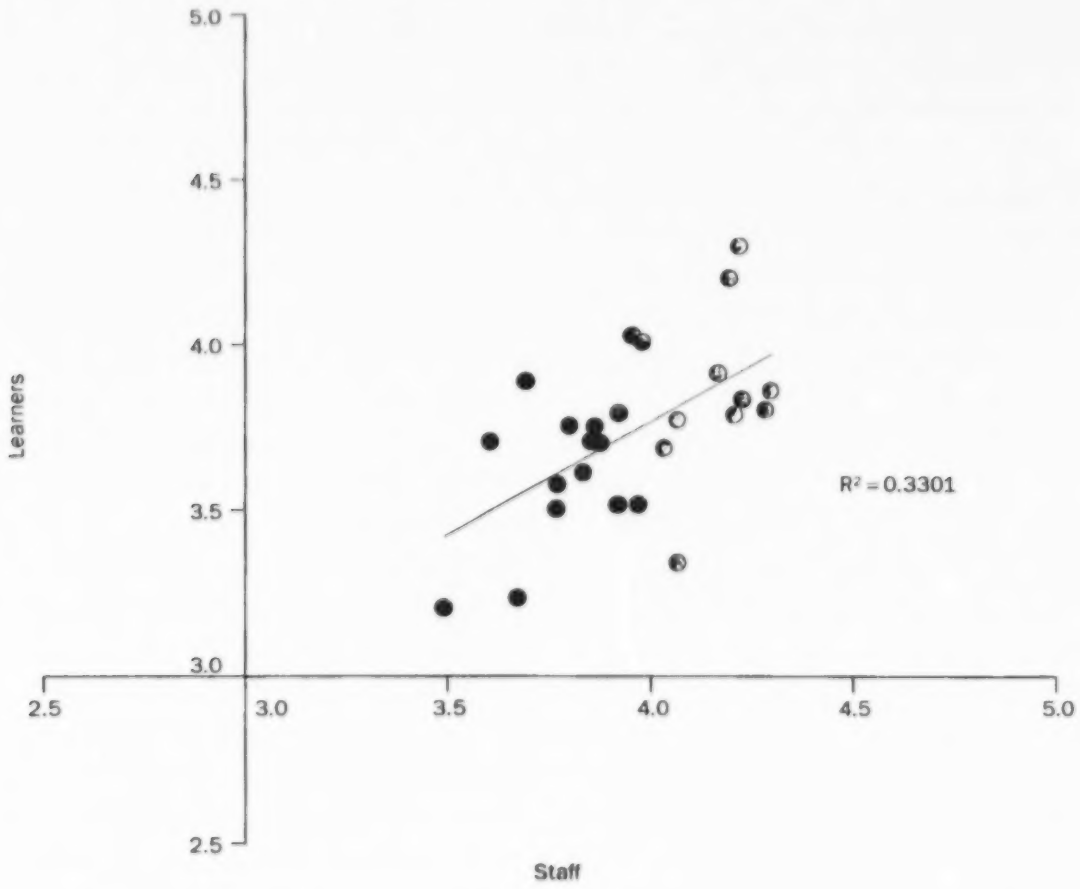
Figure 19 Learner versus staff satisfaction (2)



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Conclusions and implications

Overall, the profile of staff opinion that emerged from the 2002 staff satisfaction survey gives both reassurance and cause for concern. Reassurance because the large majority of those surveyed answered that 'overall I enjoy my job' and a clear majority would recommend their college as a good place to work. As we have noted, these findings suggest that intrinsic job satisfaction is primarily influenced by factors directly related to the education and care of learners rather than to the matters concerning college management, systems and structures that were the focus of our survey.

In these latter areas, however, almost as many staff were negative about their job and their college as were positive (though this was less true in sixth form colleges). Contrast this view with the picture of overall job satisfaction and it is possible to suggest that factors external to colleges and their management had an adverse effect on the opinion of our survey participants. However, given the links between the 'people' element of colleges, and the quality of service that they deliver, our findings still have challenging implications for much of the sector.

The mean of mean results of the survey are virtually identical for 2001 and 2002 for both the overall importance score and the overall agreement score.

There were also some indications within the survey responses of positive attitudes to job and college that were shared by a clear majority of the participants. For example, there were generally positive ratings for the statements 'My manager gives me the support I need to do my job effectively' and 'Staff work well together in teams'. This does not suggest any pervasive crisis in relationships at staff room or course team level. It should be noted, however, that agreement with the second statement could indicate general satisfaction with relationships with work colleagues rather than a true assessment of the effectiveness of teamwork.

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The next steps

The relationship between staff and learner opinion identified suggests that we should be concerned about any general tendency towards negativity in staff opinion. Such evidence indicates that, broadly speaking, satisfied learners are associated with satisfied staff and, individually, with better retention and achievement. The links between all these elements are undoubtedly complex. However, the theory and practice of marketing, and evidence from other sectors, suggests that service organisations are unlikely to have satisfied customers in the absence of positive, well-motivated staff.

Staff will be waiting to see whether their opinions have been acknowledged and what action will be planned as a result. It should also be noted that staff at some colleges made specific mention of the fact that they had either received what they considered to be a 'sanitised' version of the results or, more worryingly, that they had received no feedback at all on the results of last year's survey. It may well be that those colleges have used last year's results to make changes or to influence planning but they have not publicised the fact. It is important that those colleges that took part in the survey ensure their staff are told of both the results and any ensuing action. We would also suggest that **all** colleges, whether or not they took part in this survey, consider the issues raised by it.

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www.dti.gov.uk

European Foundation for Quality Management
www.efqm.org.uk

Investors in People
www.iipuk.co.uk

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Appendix 1 Survey participants by types of college

	Number of colleges	Number of staff	%
General FE and tertiary	62	10 299	79.4
Sixth form	29	2127	16.4
Specialist	9	538	4.1
Total	**100**	**12 964**	**100.0**

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Appendix 2 Categories of responses

A Employment

	Number	%	Valid %
Part-time teaching staff	2303	17.8	18.5
Full-time teaching staff	4020	31.0	32.3
Part-time non-teaching staff	1558	12.0	12.5
Full-time non-teaching staff	3209	24.8	25.8
Academic member of SMT	220	1.7	1.8
Non-academic member of SMT	98	0.8	0.8
Other management role (academic)	718	5.5	5.8
Other management role (non-academic)	331	2.6	2.7
Subtotal	**12 457**	**96.1**	**100.0**
Information not provided	507	3.9	
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**	

B Gender

	Number	%	Valid %
Male	4280	33.0	35.4
Female	7794	60.1	64.6
Subtotal	**12 074**	**93.1**	**100.0**
Information not provided	890	6.9	
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**	

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C Age

	Number	%
30 and under	1449	11.2
31–40	2846	22.0
41–50	4493	34.7
51 and over	3850	29.7
Subtotal	**12 638**	**97.5**
Information not provided	326	2.5
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**

D Ethnicity

	Number	%
Bangladeshi	8	0.1
Black African	48	0.4
Black Caribbean	90	0.7
Black – other	31	0.2
Chinese	15	0.1
Indian	130	1.0
Pakistani	34	0.3
White	11 852	91.4
Other / mixed	304	2.3
Subtotal	**12 512**	**96.5**
Information not provided	452	3.5
Total	**12 964**	**100.0**

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raising quality
and achievement
programme

The Learning and Skills Development Agency's staff satisfaction survey gives colleges the opportunity to measure levels of staff satisfaction and obtain feedback from staff on issues within the college whilst maintaining the confidentiality of individual staff members. This publication is based primarily on the 2002 survey results from 100 participating colleges, from which almost 13,000 completed questionnaires were received.

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